

Working Toward a Common Good

By Council President Scott Peters, First District

In the 17 years that I've lived in La Jolla, I've come to appreciate the great sense of pride and ownership in our town. As a result, change is always met with much community discussion and debate. Mostly that discussion is positive, driven by civic-minded residents who consider the facts of the case and offer their thoughts on what will make our community better. Unfortunately, sometimes that discussion is dominated by fear or personal animosities, which lead to harsh words and actions. In a time of change, it can be hard to keep the bonds and the trust that allow communities to work through difficult issues. We've seen this struggle recently in our community.

Revisions to the La Jolla Planned District Ordinance ("PDO") are currently being considered by the La Jolla Community Planning Association. The PDO is a set of zoning rules and regulations tailored specifically to meet the needs of La Jolla, which supplement the citywide Land Development Code.

The larger La Jolla community has been working for many years to update the PDO to meet the needs of our community as it grows and changes. I was a community volunteer back in the early 1990's when we decided to revise the plan in order to protect the unique character of the Village.

Some people have offered ideas on how our zoning restrictions could be improved. Many disagree with these ideas, even vigorously. That's great, and wrestling with disagreements is how we worked through tough issues like the Bird Rock traffic plan and the community plan update. But for the first time we've seen vandalism associated with the discussion. The businesses of two architects involved in the PDO proposal have been targeted by graffiti and attempted arson.

Another issue dividing our community is the proposal to construct an *eruv* to serve Congregation Adat Yeshurun. An *eruv* is an enclosed area allowing Orthodox Jewish families to push strollers or wheelchairs and carry children between their home and temple on the Sabbath. It is made of a monofilament similar to fishing line that is strung between streetlights to create a closed circle. San Diego already has one *eruv* serving the College Area.

Some see the *eruv* as a way to improve the lives of some La Jolla families without affecting the rest of us. Others have concerns about the proposal. I welcome the discussion, but I am discouraged by the hurtful and even bigoted tone some in the debate have taken. For the first time, my emails burn with unveiled anti-Semitism I thought we left behind in the 1930's.

There has even been a conflict in the community as to whether La Jolla Youth Baseball should be able to place sponsorship banners at Cliffridge Park. Many parents worked to raise money for the banners, which are similar to those at other fields around the city.

Some people don't like the aesthetics, but for the first time, a theft. Six banners costing over \$150 each were stolen from the park last week.

A community is more than just buildings and streets and in our case, beautiful parks and oceans. Let's not get so preoccupied with buildings and signs that we forget that community is about shared goals and interests, and a diverse coalition of people coming together for the common good. Let's all do what we can to build better bonds among the people here.